

Co-operatives AUSTRALIA



Minute of meeting, Thursday 14 October 2010 12.20 p.m. – 05:30 p.m. offices of O'Loughlins Lawyers, Second floor, 99 Frome Street, Adelaide, South Australia

PRESENT: Co-operative Federation of New South Wales (Tony Rogic and Helen McCall), Jim Howard (Co-operative Federation of Queensland), Co-operative Federation of South Australia (David Osgood and Trevor Schmidt), Co-operatives Victoria (David Griffiths), and Co-operatives WA (Chris Enright and Peter Wells) plus by invitation Trent Bartlett (Deputy Chairman, Co-operatives WA and CEO, Capricorn Society).

1. Meeting Notes

Agreed:

That the minutes of CA meeting of 31 May 2010 be accepted as a true and accurate record.

ACTION: Secretary

2. Business arising from previous minutes

2.1 Legislation – Co-operatives National Law

2.1.1 Update

There was concern about progress with the Co-operatives National Law and selective consultation on special resolutions and majority voting percentages. The concern was the absence of feedback on proposed amendments following the submissions on the exposure draft.

It was agreed to seek a meeting with the National Cooperatives Working Party on what amendments were being made to the exposure draft and, in particular, what was now being proposed for mutual recognition registration, the threshold for exemption from audit, majority voting percentages, provisions for dismissing directors and provisions for proxies.

ACTION: Secretary

It was agreed that these concerns would also be raised by individual Federations with Registrars and seek their support for a meeting with the National Co-operatives Working Party.

ACTION: All Federations

2.1.2 Joint Accounting Bodies

CFQ and CFNSW reported that they had not prepared the draft letter to the Joint Accounting Bodies requesting a meeting and circulate this for approval.

It was noted that when prepared the draft letter would be circulated.

ACTION: CFNSW and CFQ

2.1.3 Co-operative Regulations WA

It was noted that these were available and online. Co-operatives WA offered to re-circulate the URL for the Regulations.

ACTION: Co-operatives WA

2.2 australia.coop

The statistics for australia.coop were noted.

2.3 Top 100

It was noted that the 2nd list had finally been released and the Chairman said that he was responsible for the delay in the release. It was agreed that future lists should not be delayed as it was important that the updated lists were released at the same time each year/

The Secretary reported that ABACUS Australian Mutuals involvement with the IYC Steering Committee had meant it had been possible to access member and employee numbers for credit unions and building societies.

It was agreed that in future the annual list would be released in April of each year – commencing in 2011.

The Secretary will circulate a timetable for meeting this deadline within a fortnight.

It was also agreed to consider ways of increasing awareness and promoting the list e.g. through advertising supplements.

ACTION: Secretary

2.4 International Year of Co-operatives

It was noted that there had been four meetings of the IYC Steering Committee hosted by Social Business Australia.

It was noted that ABACUS Australian Mutuals was supporting the Steering Committee and that the Committee had difficulty in discovering an appropriate Minister and portfolio that would have responsibility.

In the discussion that followed the importance of bipartisanship approaches was agreed.

There was discussion on Co-operatives Australia as a peak body in terms of 2012 and what CA's vision was for the future.

ACTION: All

It was also agreed that 2012 was not an end in itself.

It was agreed to initially endorse the following 2012 initiatives:

1. A national conference that is not simply an isolated activity during the year but is integrated with and complements individual State programs and activities.
2. A co-operative roadshow that will tour throughout Australia,
3. A visit to Australia by Dame Pauline Green in 2012
4. The eventual development of a national co-operative logo that may be used and adopted by all of Australia's co-operatives
5. Co-operative tours inside and outside Australia in 2012.

6. A commitment to work through and strengthen co-operative representation at a national level with an agreed mission, objectives and structure.
7. Continue to publish the annual list of top 100 co-operatives, credit unions and mutuals and work towards increased awareness and promotion of the list from 2011.

It was noted that a national co-operative conference should be in a non-sitting period for the Australian Parliament and a non-teaching period to maximise the participation of the Universities of Sydney and WA and academics from other interested Universities.

ACTION: Secretary

It was agreed that a statement on the importance of IYC would be prepared for use by State Federations.

It was agreed that a draft statement would be prepared and circulated for finalisation.

ACTION: Secretary and All

It was agreed that each Federation should consider the list of proposed IYC activities developed by Co-operatives WA and what each Federation was willing to support and undertake as well as other initiatives and share this information with other Federations.

ACTION: All

2.5 School Co-operatives

The report from Co-operatives WA about school co-operatives was considered.

The Secretary reported that he had queried the current status of school co-operatives in the UK with Mervyn Wilson and Chris Cooper but had not received a response.

It was agreed to take no further action

ACTION: All

2.6 Co-operative Profile Survey

Co-operatives WA reported it had yet to roll-out the survey but 10 co-operatives had completed a partial survey.

CFSA reported that it would adopt the survey and Co-operatives Victoria said it would also adopt the survey.

ACTION: All

2.7 Co-operative Consultants Database

There was discussion on the establishment of a national database of co-operative consultants on australia.coop

It was noted that the NZCA had established a NZ Co-operative Development Council for anyone interested in developing co-operatives and that an Australian Co-operative Development Council could be established and promoted on australia.coop

It was agreed that there would be further consideration of the issue.

ACTION: All

2.8 Co-operative Education Calendar

There was discussion on a calendar of events on the australia.coop web site and no decision was made.

ACTION: Secretary

3. Reports from Federations

NSW reported on a membership of 80, the Sydney University linkage project, insufficient membership numbers to pay a salary and a decision to increase income through more events and workshops and the development of a co-operative education Co-operative Insight program aimed at directors, managers and staff.

SA reported on making approaches to politicians, its conference the next day and the formation of a Grain Growers co-operative following takeover of ABB Grain Ltd (the successor of the Australian Barley Board) by the Canadian company Viterra, and his replacement who would start on the 1 January 2011.

VIC reported on approaches to politicians leading up to an election in November, a possible Co-operative College workshop in November and work on the history booklet The Phoenix – the South East Housing Co-operative Ltd.

WA reported on its conference, a survey of director fees, the linkage grant with the University of WA, relationship with the registrar's office and a survey on CCU's.

QLD reported on a successful conference, the demutualisation of large co-operatives and lessening support for co-operative values and principles.

4. Other Matters

4.1 Director Fees

It was agreed that State Federations would consider supporting a national survey on director fees.

ACTION: All

4.2 Fare Equalisation

CFSA will apply fare equalisation based on the formula developed by Co-operatives WA and used for the last face-to-face meeting in 2009.

ACTION: CFSA

4.3 University of Sydney

Concern was expressed with the accuracy of the document Australian Co-operative Data Research, Reports and Links Compiled August 2010, Co-operative Research Group, Faculty of Economics and Business, The University of Sydney.

It was agreed that CFNSW would progress the concern and report the outcome.

ACTION: CFNSW

5. Further 2010 - 11 Meetings

It was agreed that conference calls would be organised on a as need basis.

It was also agreed that the next face-to-face would be in Sydney, NSW, in November 2011.

ACTION: Secretary

David Griffiths
Chair and Secretary
Draft Minute – 17 October 2010
Final Minute – 30 October 2010